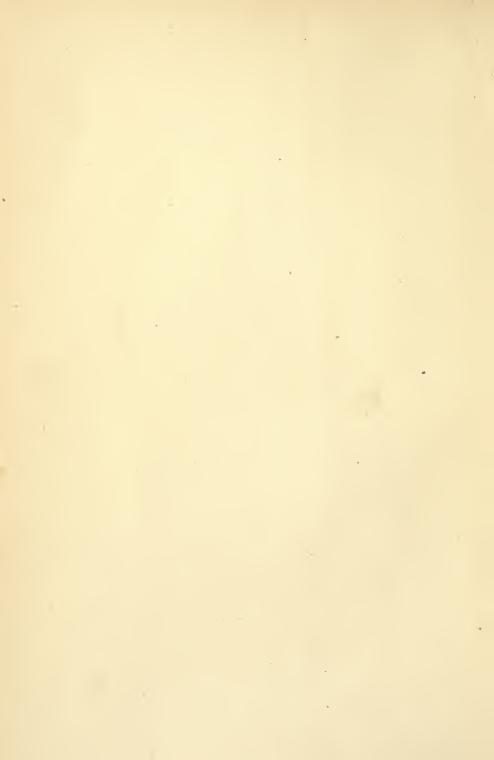
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BY

HAMILTONWRIGHT MABIE







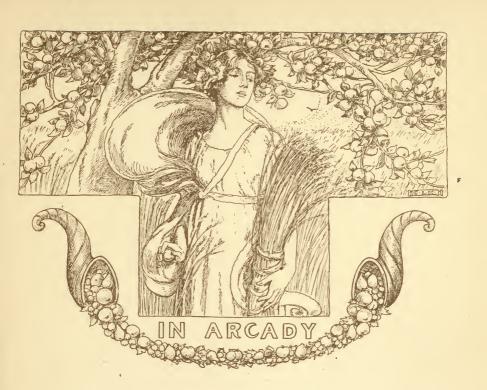


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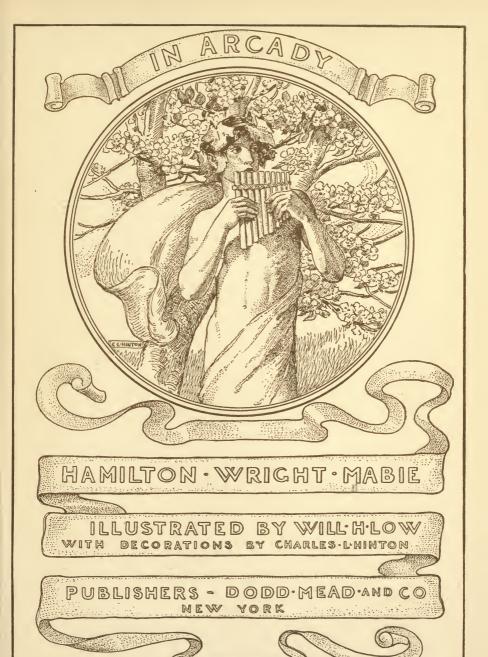


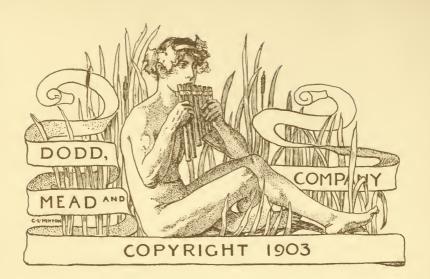
MY STUDY FIRE
MY STUDY FIRE, SECOND SERIES
UNDER THE TREES AND ELSEWHERE
SHORT STORIES IN LITERATURE
ESSAYS IN LITERARY INTERPRETATION
ESSAYS ON NATURE AND CULTURE
BOOKS AND CULTURE
ESSAYS ON WORK AND CULTURE
THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT
NORSE STORIES
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
FOREST OF ARDEN
CHILLO OF NATURE
WORKS AND DAYS
PARABLES OF LIFE
MY STUDY FIRE. ILLUSTRATED
UNDER THE TREES. ILLUSTRATED



"The Goddess moving across the fields"









JAMES LANE ALLEN



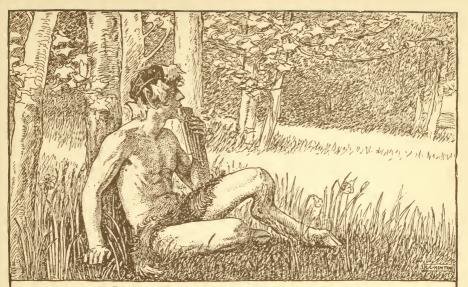




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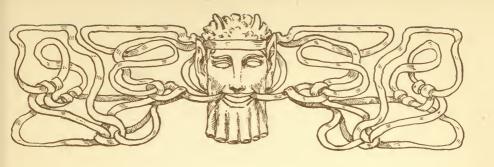




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THE PIPES OF THE FAUN

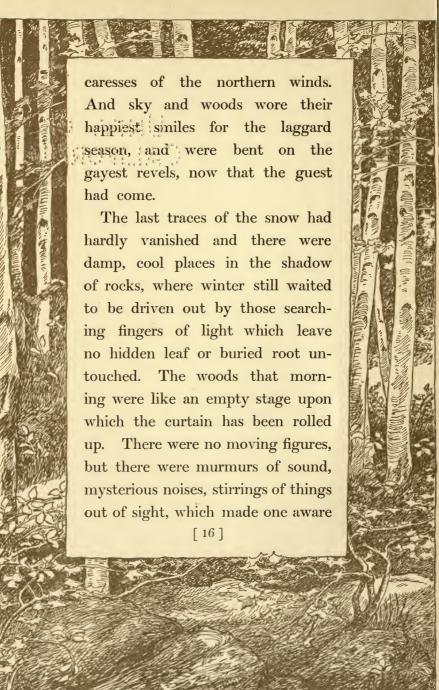
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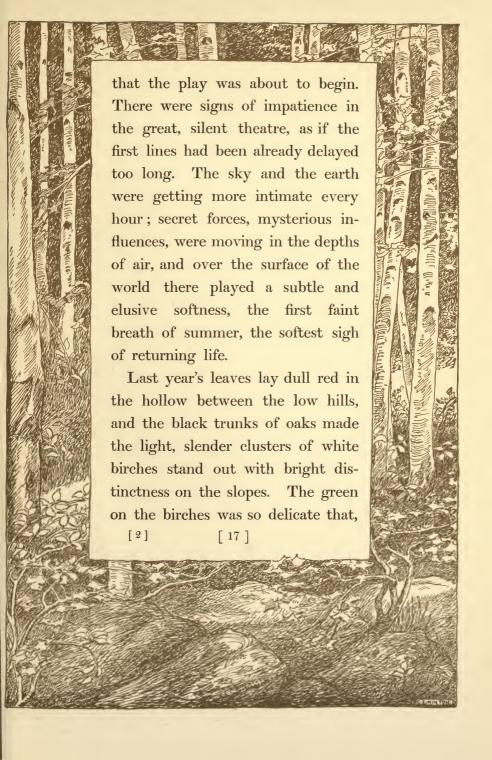


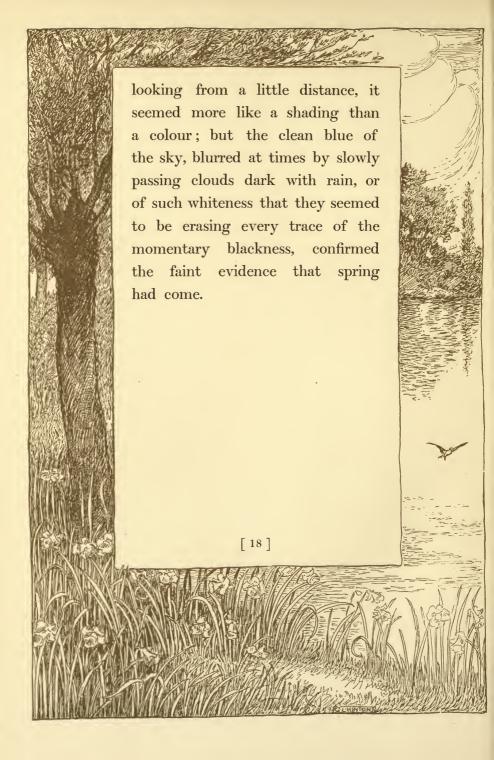


I

HE tenderest green was on the foliage, the whitest clouds were in the sky, and the showers were so sudden that the birds were hardly dry of one wetting before there came another. These swift dashes of rain seemed to fall out of the clear blue, so mysteriously did the light clouds dissolve into the depths of heaven after every rush of pattering drops in the woods. It was the first spring day. The season had come shyly up from the south, as if half afraid to trust its sensitive growths to the harsh airs and rough







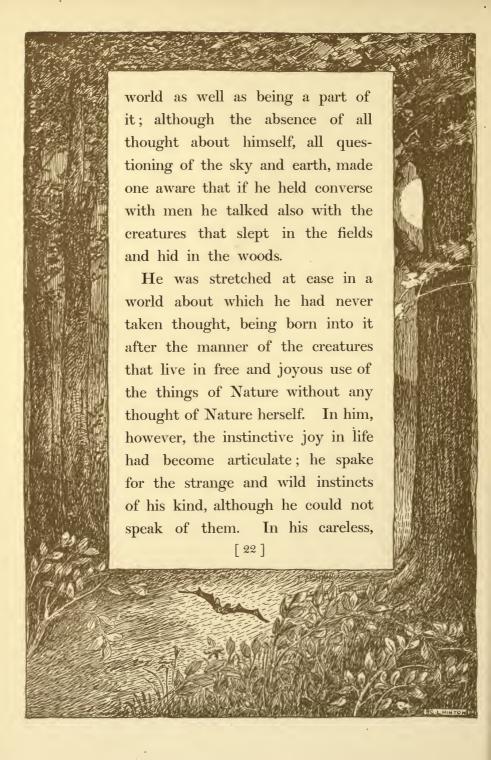


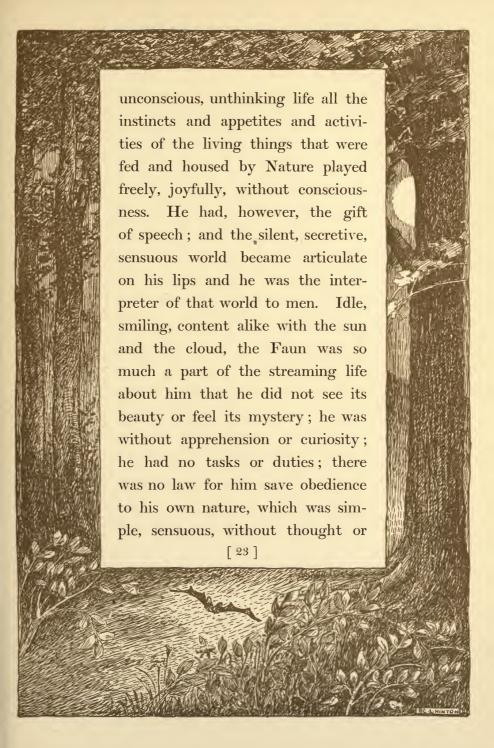
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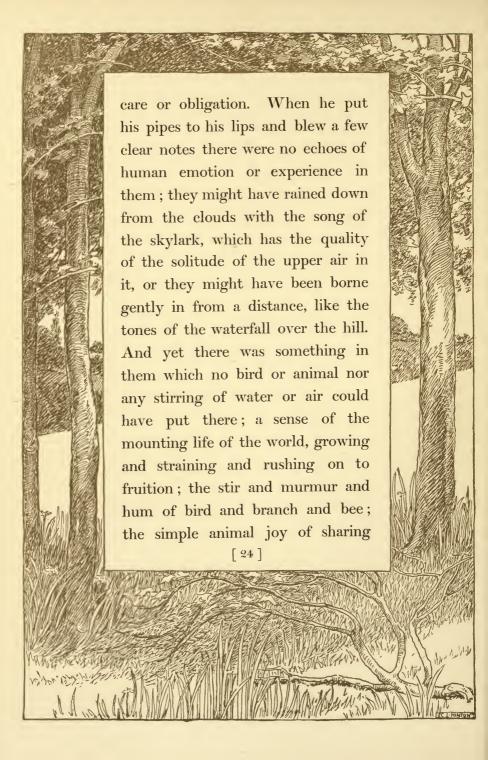


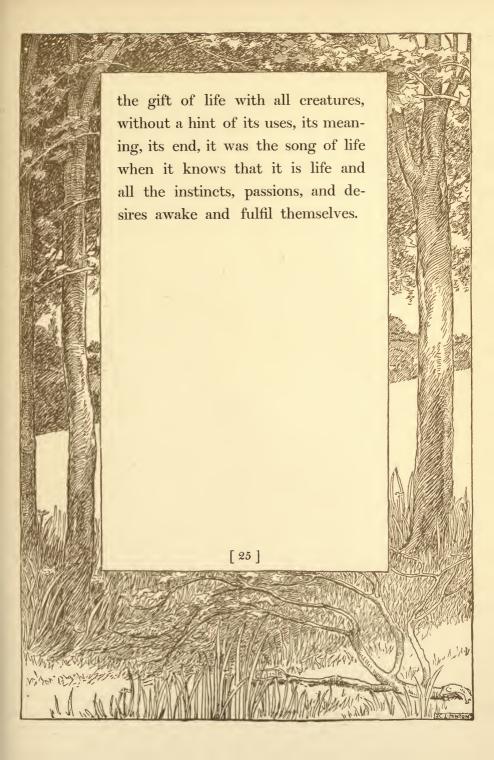
II

O, at least, thought the Faun, sitting at ease with his back against an oak, his pipe in his hand and his eye wandering curiously through the open spaces of the wood. So entirely at home was he that solitude or society was alike to him, and the speech of men or of animals equally plain. There were hints of wildness about him; for he was brother to the folk in fur and feather that lived in the wood, although the light in his eye and the pipe in his hand showed that he had travelled far from the old instincts without having lost them. There were hints of human fellowship in his air of seeing the







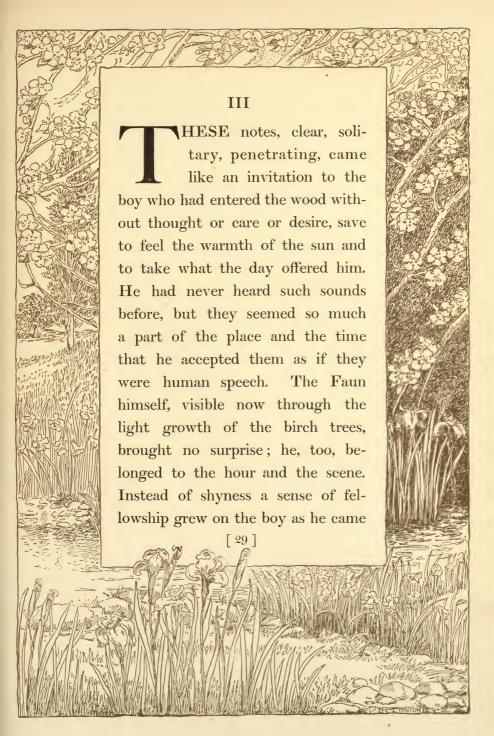


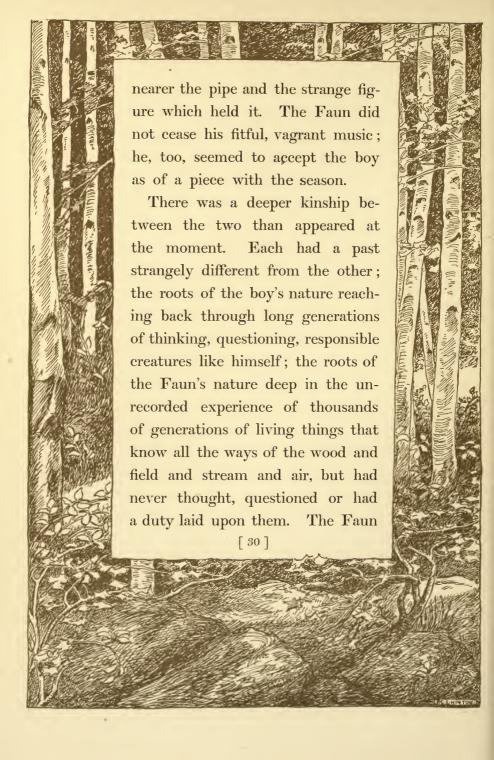


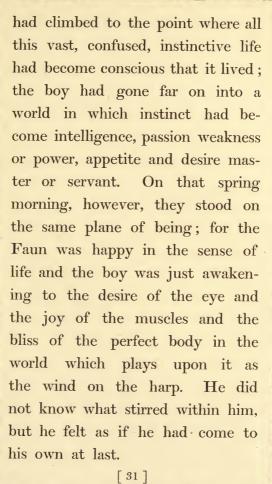


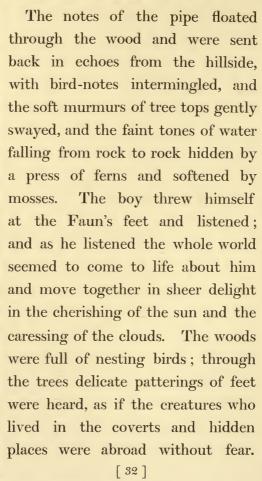
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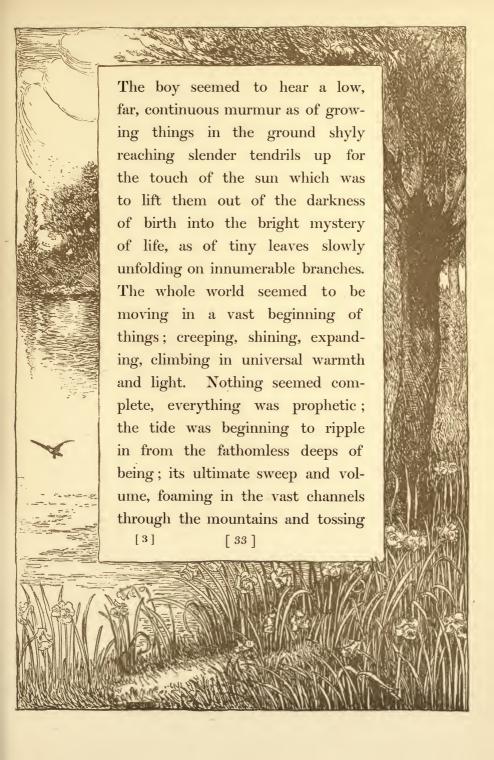


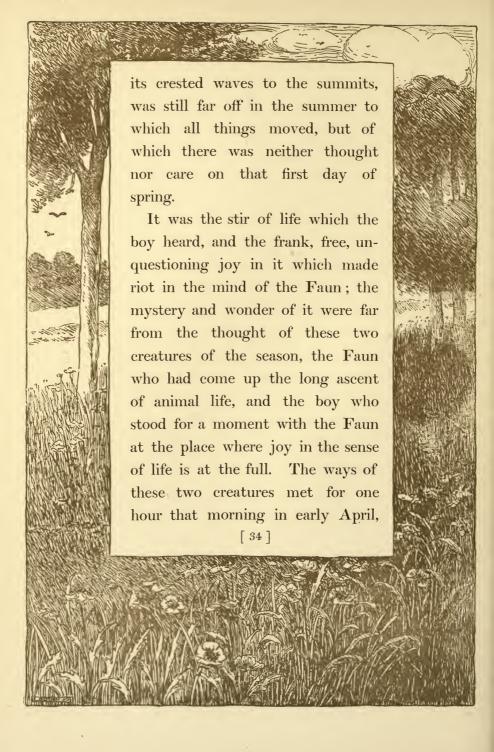


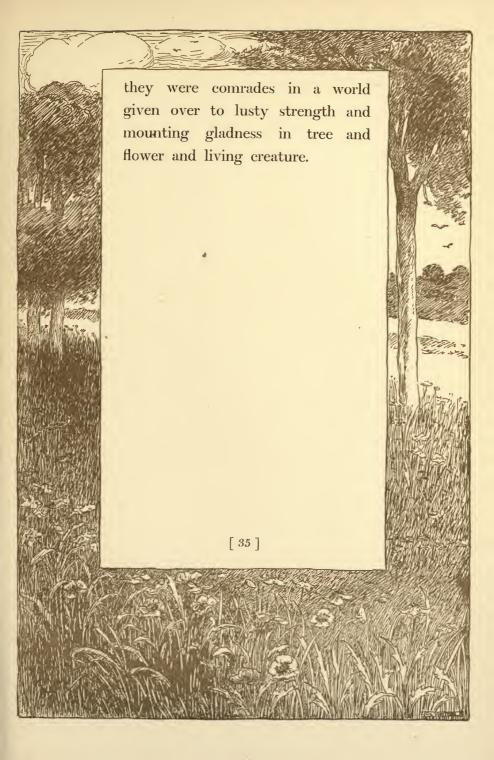


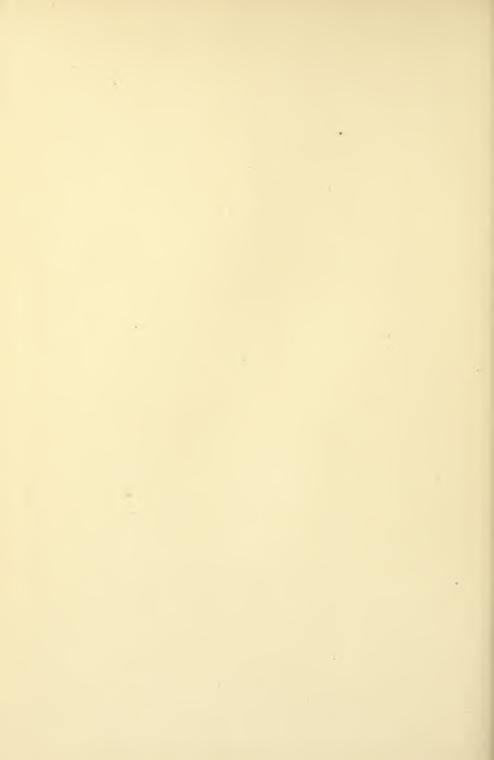














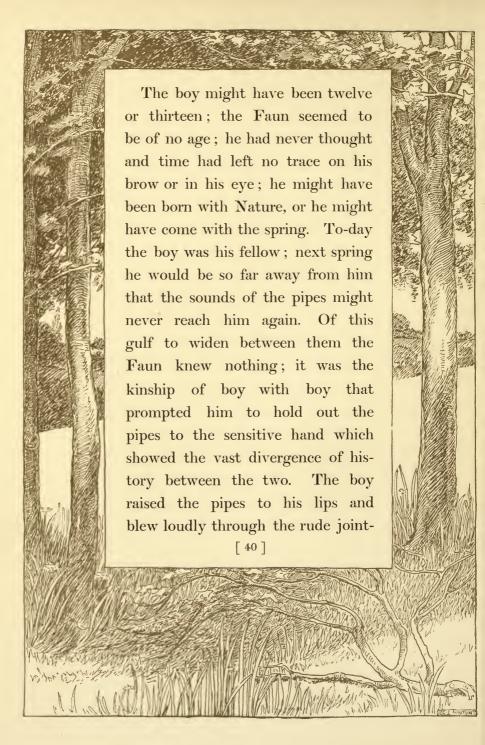
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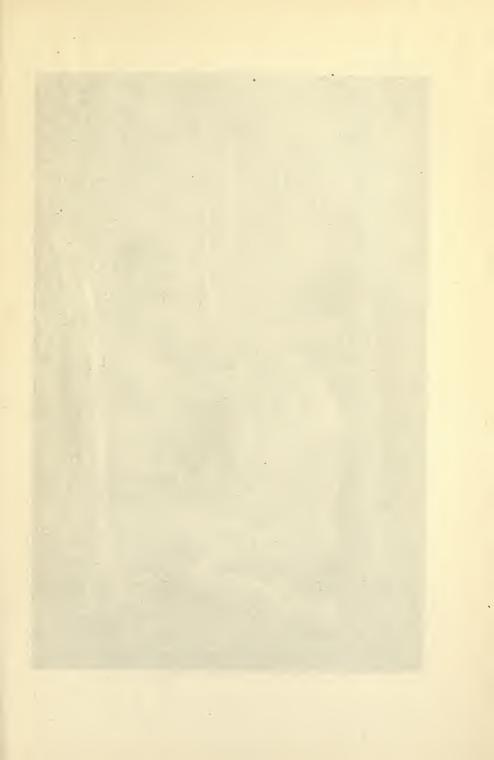


IV

O the merry piping of the Faun the boy laughed gleefully; here was the wild playmate who could take him deeper into the woods than he had ever ventured and show him the shy creatures who were always eluding his eager search. And the Faun, who was nearer his brothers of the wood than his brothers of the thatched roof and the vine trained against the wall, saw in the boy a fellow of his own mind; to whom the wind was a challenge to kindred fleetness and the notes of the birds floating down the mountain side invitations to adventure and action.

[39]

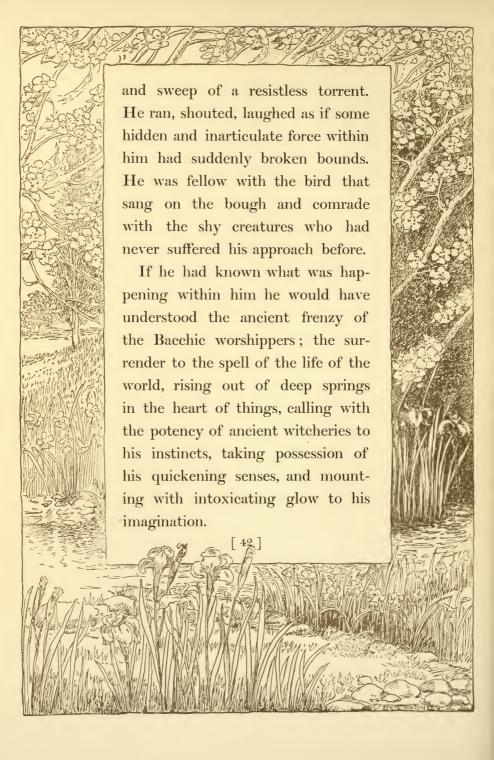






ure of reeds, and then hung on the far-travelling sounds which he had set loose. There was a strange compelling power in them as they seemed to penetrate further and further into the wood, and seizing the hand of the Faun the two ran together up the wooded hill and over its crest into a world of which the boy had only dreamed before.

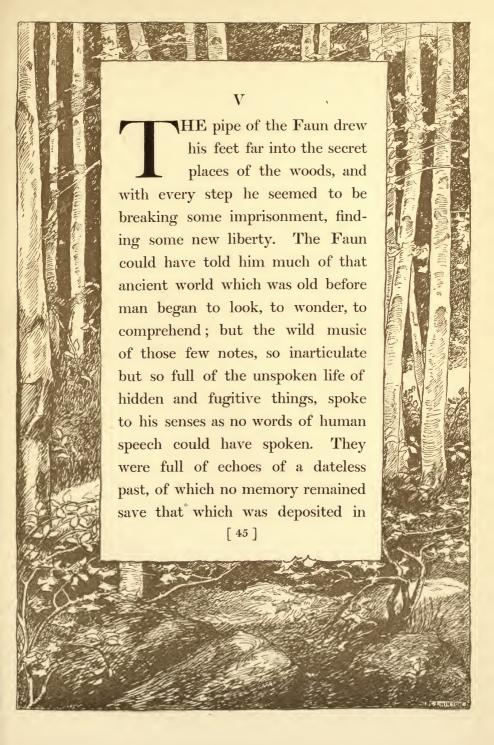
He had seen the world a thousand times before, but now it flowed in upon him through all the channels of his senses; a rushing, singing, tumultuous tide swept him along, and with the jubilant stream the joy of life flooded his mind and heart. A wild exultation seized him, swept him out of himself, and carried him on with the power

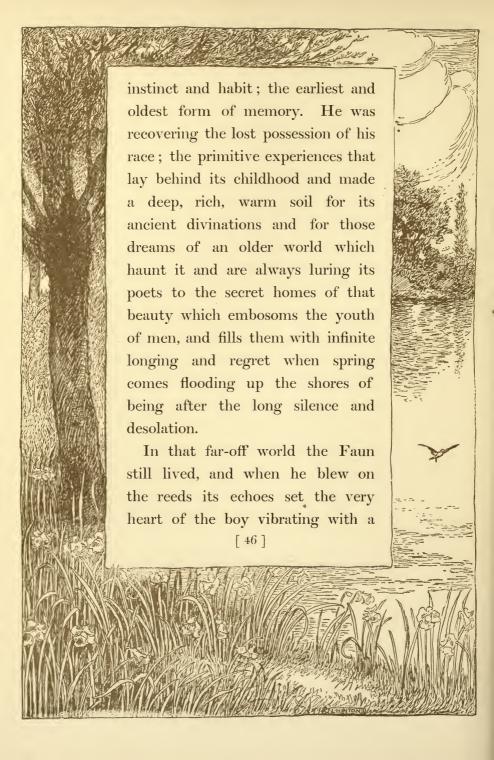


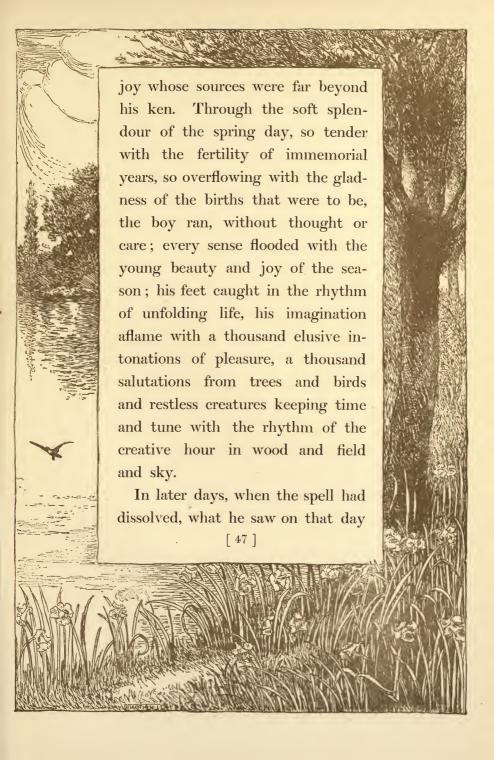


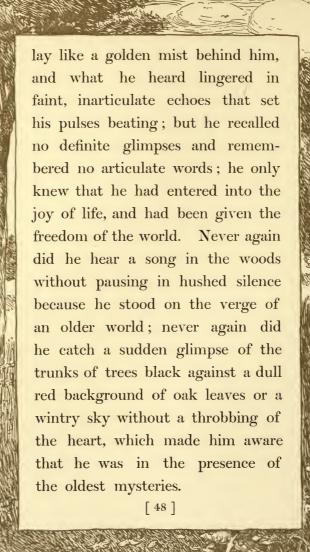
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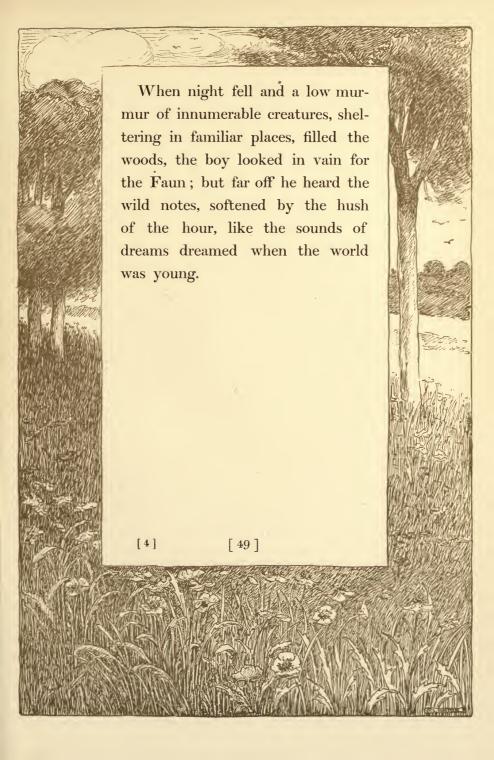




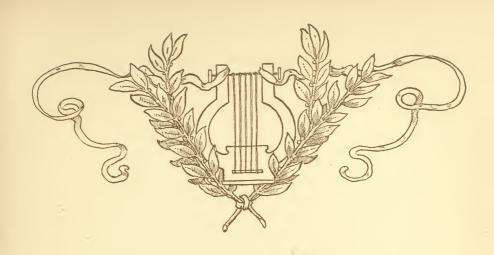












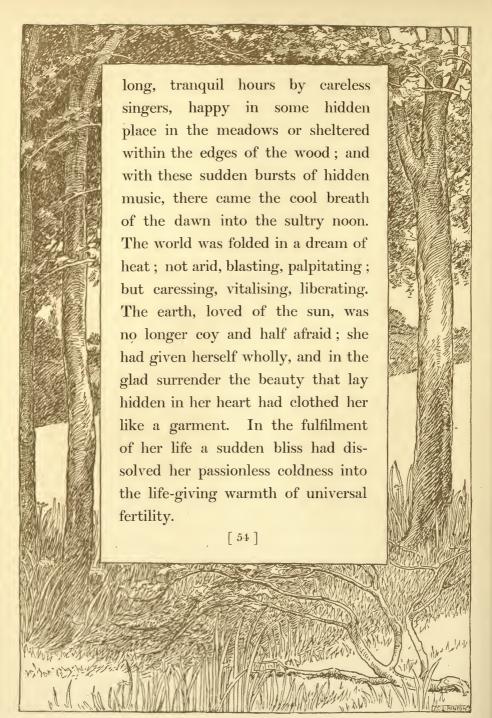
THE LYRE OF APOLLO

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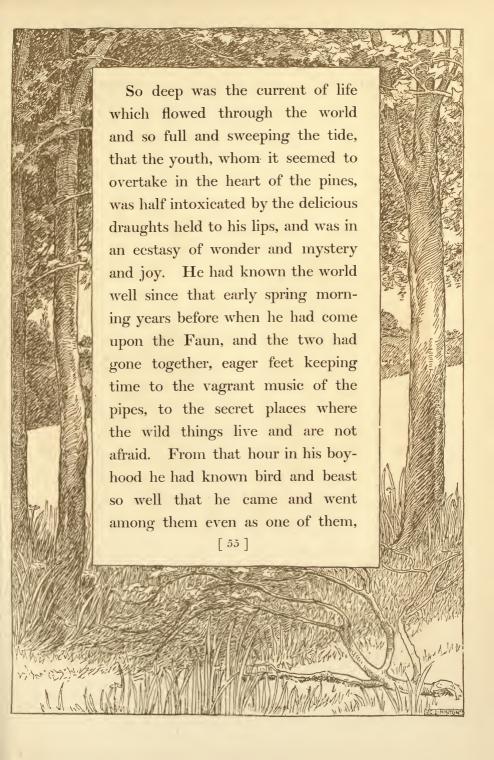
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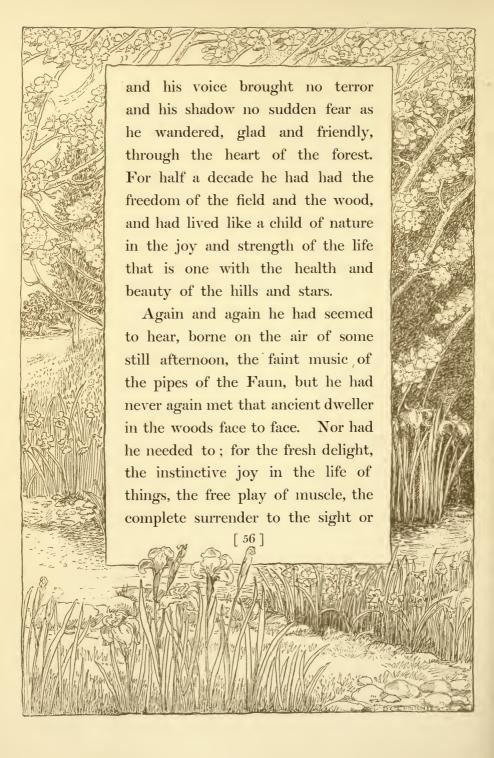
T was mid-June and the world was in flower. The delicate promise of April, when the pipes of the Faun echoed in the depths of woods faintly touched with the tenderest green, was fulfilled in a mass and ripeness of foliage which had parted with none of its freshness, but had become like a sea of moving and whispering greenness. The delicious heat of the early summer evoked a vagrant and elusive fragrance from the young grasses starred with flowers. The morning songs, which made the break of day throb with an ecstasy of melody, were caught up again and again through the

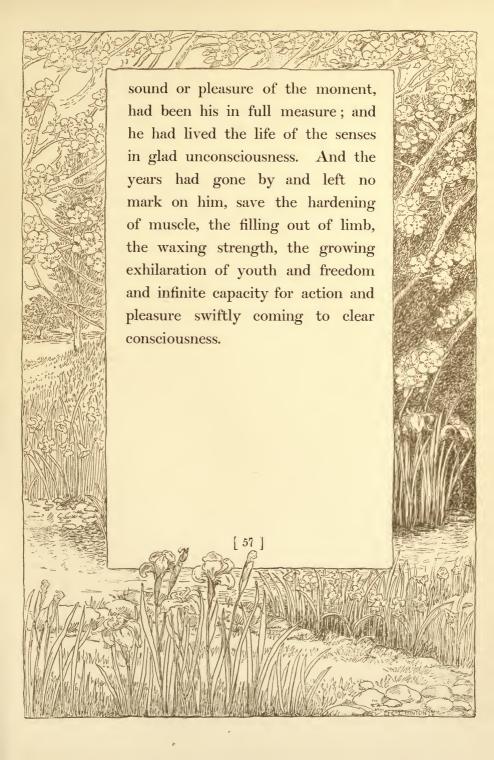




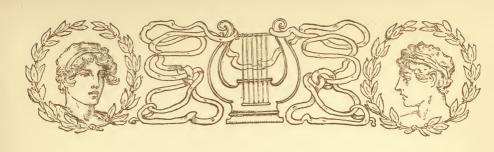












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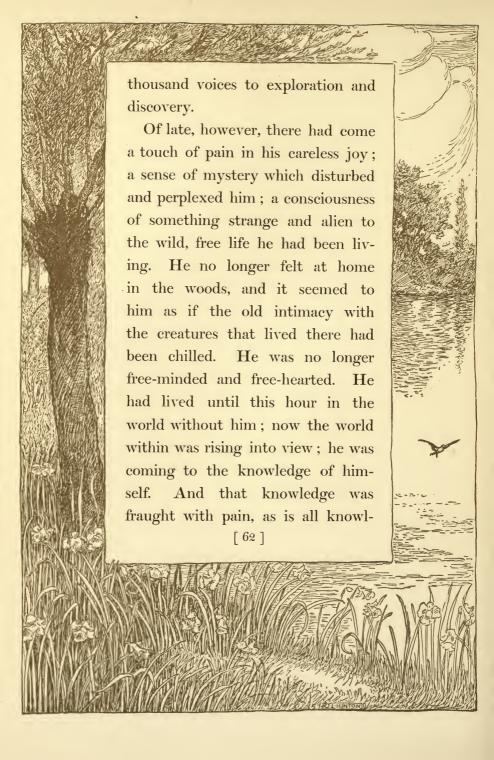
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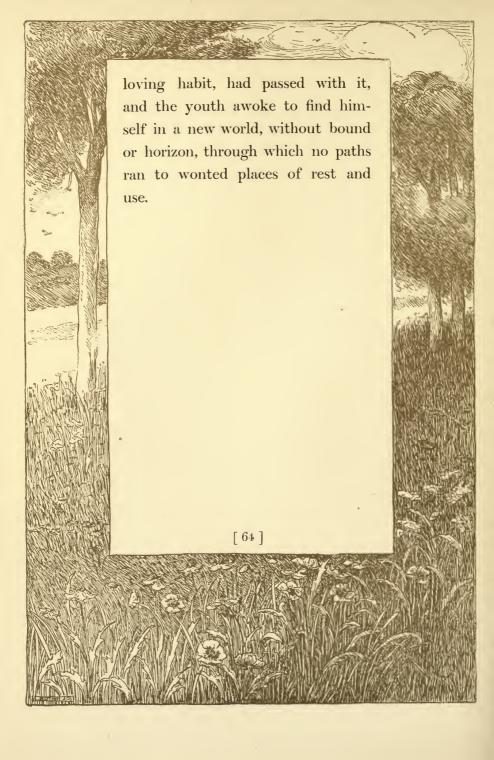
HROUGH the long years of boyhood Nature lay mirrored in his senses without blur or mist, and the images of her manifold wonder and beauty had sunk into the depths of his being. He had lived in the moving world that lay about him, stirred into incessant action by its constant appeal to his energy, caught up and carried forward for days together in a joyful rush of play; led hither and thither in endless quest of little mysteries of sight and sound that teased and baffled him; absorbed into complete self-forgetfulness by the vast continent where his lot was cast, which called him with a

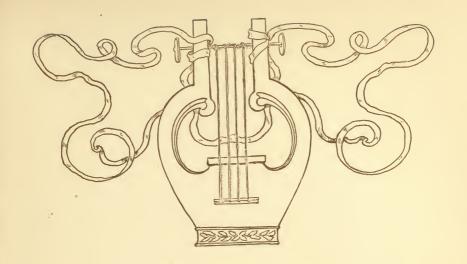
[61]



edge that penetrates to a man's soul and becomes part of him. As a child he had known only one world; now another world was rising into view, vexed with mists, obscured by shadows; a strange, mysterious, undiscovered country, full of enchantments, but elusive and baffling.

The world he knew seemed to contradict and fall apart from the world which was slowly disclosing itself to him, like a planet wheeling out of storm and mist into an ordered sphere. Every morning brought him the joy of discovery and the pain of "moving about in worlds not realised." The old order of his life had suddenly vanished; the sense of familiarity, of intimate living, of home-keeping and home-





III

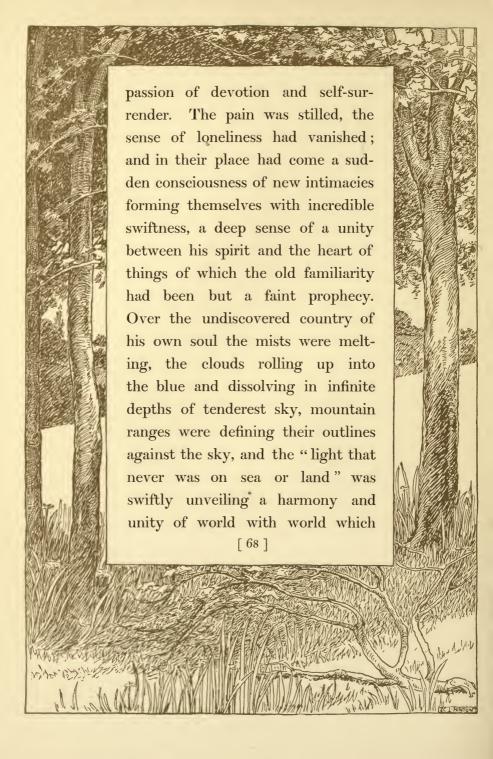


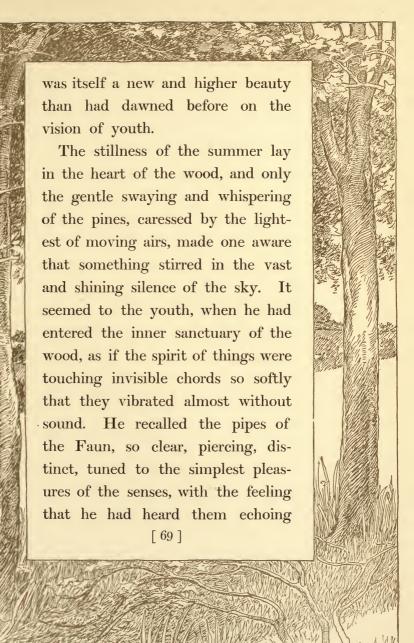


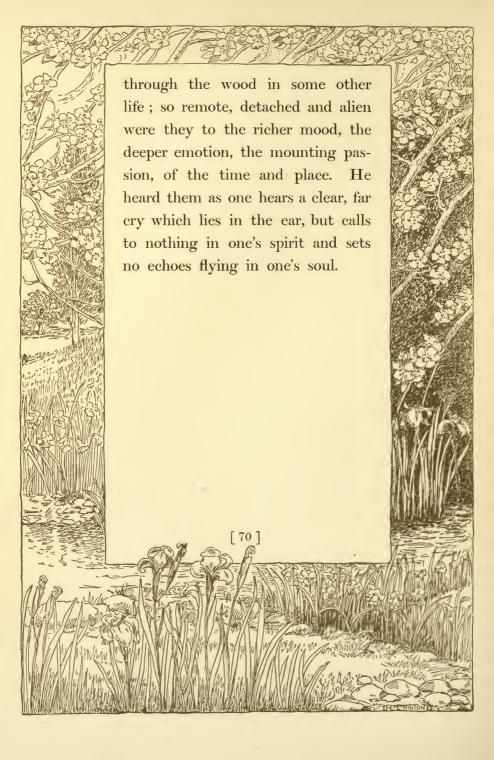
N such a mood, exhilarated and depressed, full of mounting life, but with the touch of pain on his spirit, the youth had found the murmur of the pines soothing and restful; like a cool hand laid on a hot forehead. Again and again, in these confused and perplexing months, he had fled to their silence and shade as to a retreat in the heart of old and dear things.

As he came across the fields on this radiant morning all the springs of joy were once more rising in him; the young summer touched him through every sense, and his soul rushed out to meet her in a

[67]









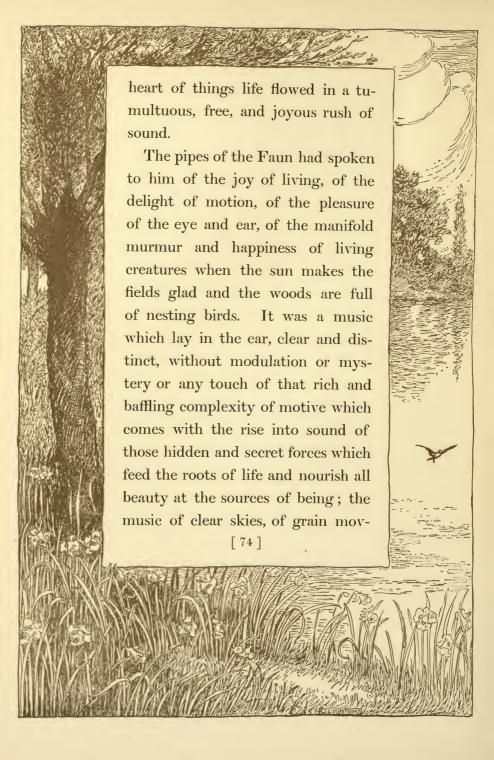
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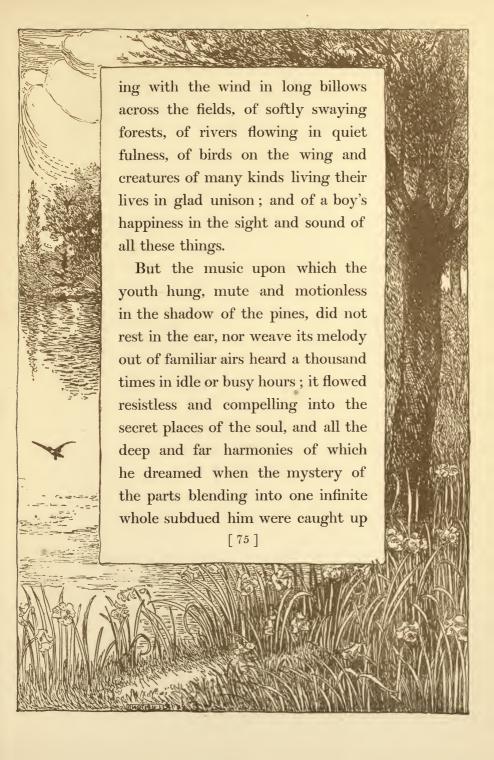


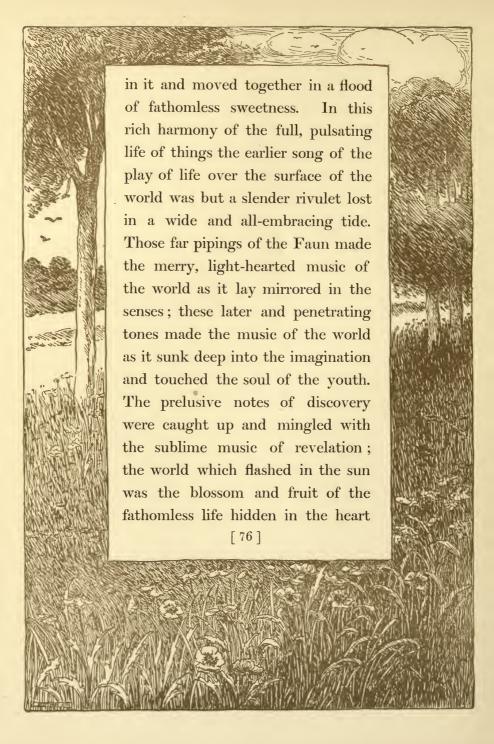
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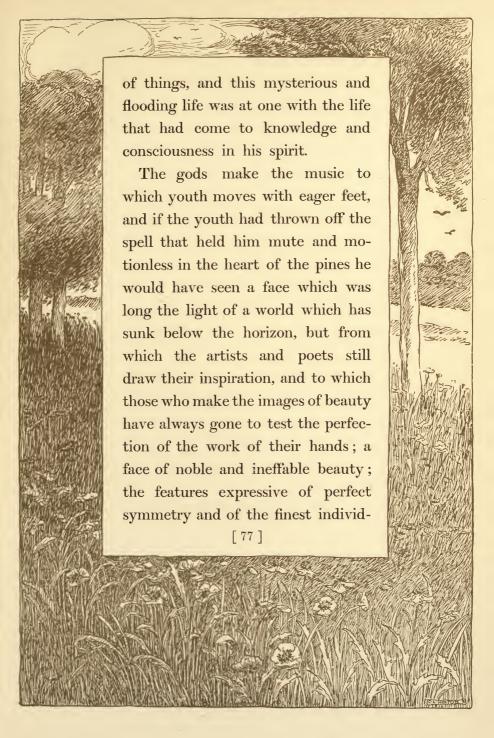
ND while he hung upon the silence, with the faint, shrill notes of the pipes making old music in his memory, suddenly, as from some deeper retreat, some more ancient sanctuary, there rose upon the hushed air a melody that laid a finger on his lips and a hand on his heart and flooded the innermost recesses of his being. Stricken with sudden silence, mute under the spell of a music which left no thought unspoken and no experience unexpressed, he hung on the thrilling notes as if all the wonder and beauty and mystery of the world and the soul had found speech at last, and out of the innermost

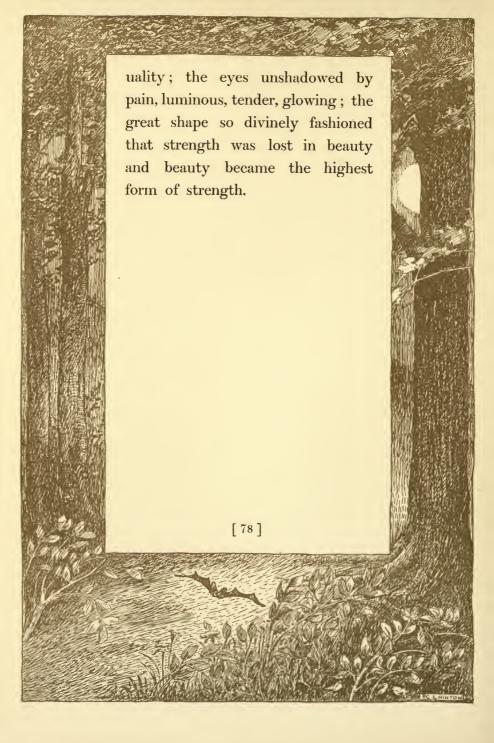
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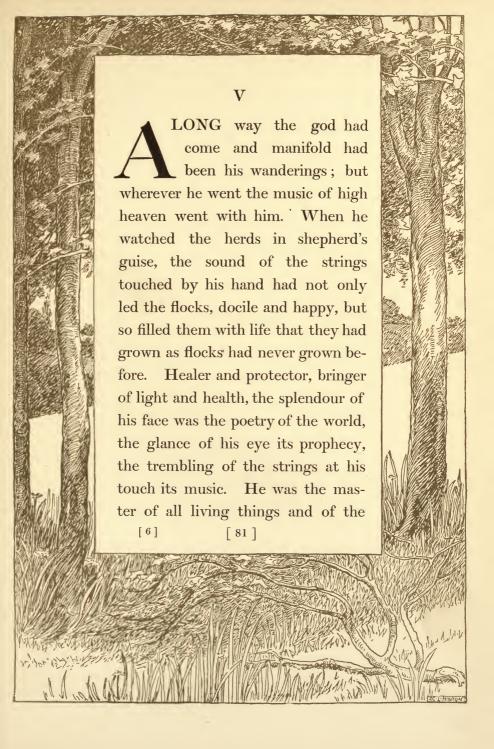


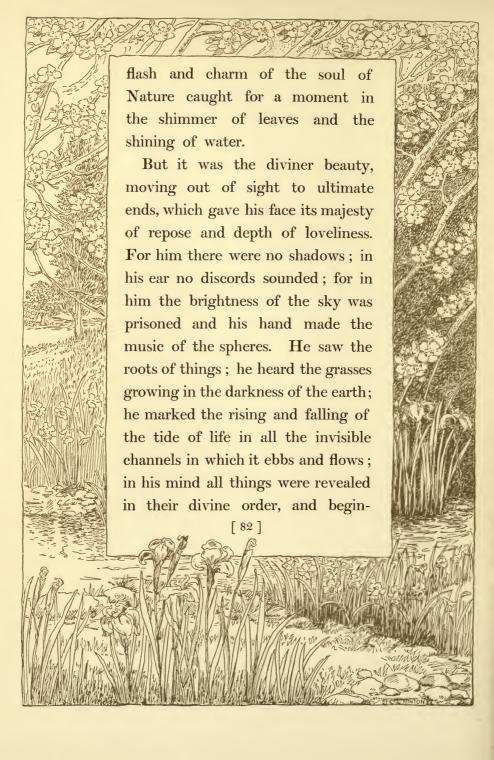


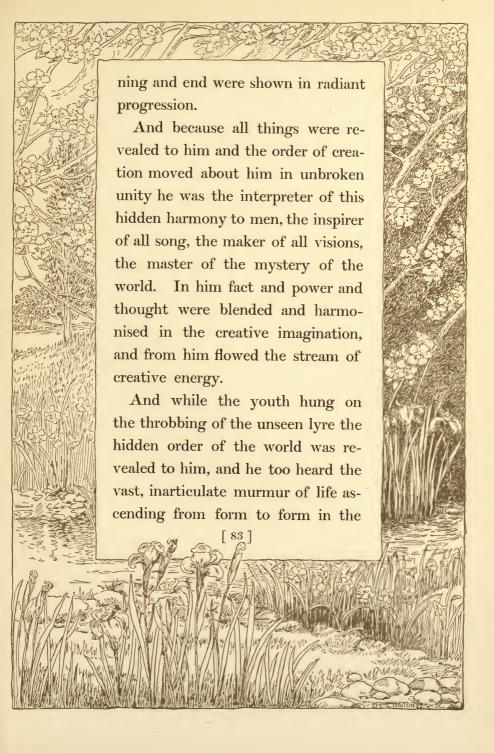


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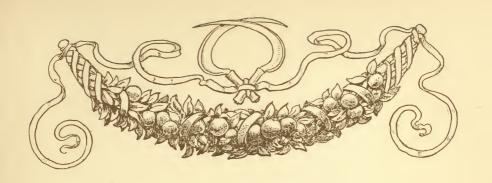






depths where the forces that mould the mountain summits and colour the light that shines on them, that fashion the flower with delicate skill and drive forth the blast that blights it, forever build and destroy that they may rebuild on broader foundations and on a nobler plan.

And the meaning of the world grew clear; for the youth understood his own spirit, and in that knowledge the confusions vanished while the mystery deepened; and the splendour fell on his heart so that it was a pain, and the melody of it seemed too great for his spirit.



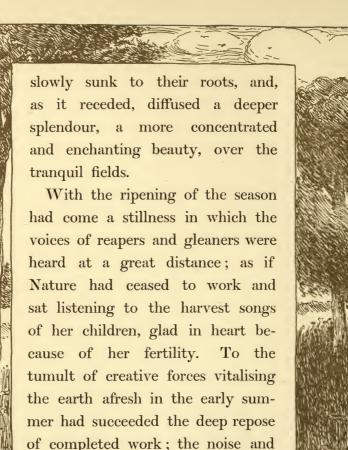
THE SICKLE OF DEMETER

Ι



Ι

N the great, open world of farspreading fields there was a sense of repose. The tide which had fertilised all things that grow and bloom and bear fruit was beginning to ebb, though there was no sign of vanishing beauty on the face of the landscape. In the riot of midsummer, when the lust of life sometimes rose to a kind of Bacchic fury of delight, there had been no richer bloom of beauty on the surface of Nature than that which lay, half seen and half remembered, on the fields in the ripe autumn afternoon. The rich loveliness that had once spread itself like a soft veil over all things had



which follows fast upon the fin-

clamour of action had died in the silence of that meditative mood ished task and reveals its quality and significance.

The final transfiguration which, like a great torch held aloft by a networting gooddess, was to flash

retreating goddess, was to flash from the heart of things a sudden, brief, and ineffable splendour, was still unlighted, and the earth rested in quiet content, ripe with all fruitfulness, laden with the wealth of vine and grain and bending bough. Through long, tranquil days the rhythm of the scythe had beat on the ear, and brought back an ancient music heard in forgotten years when the race was young and played with the gods who still haunted the world they had made. The heavy-laden wain had moved slowly across the fields, like some

[89]

rude barge overweighted with an opulent cargo, and awkwardly drifting through the long afternoons to its anchorage beside the great, empty barns. A steady heat, not blinding and consuming, but pervasive and penetrating, evoked the sweetness of ripened grain, and mellow fruits seemed to distil and express their sweetness in the air. The fragrance of fruitage, so much richer than that of the budding time, filled the world and made the heart glad with the sense of fulfilment and possession.



II

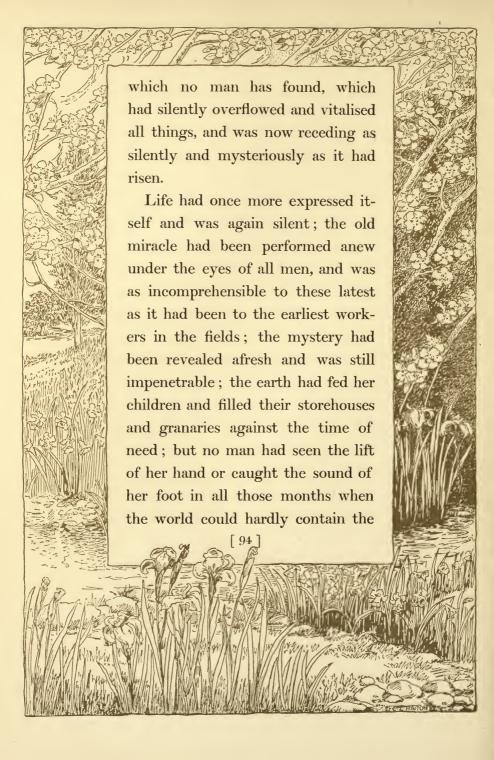


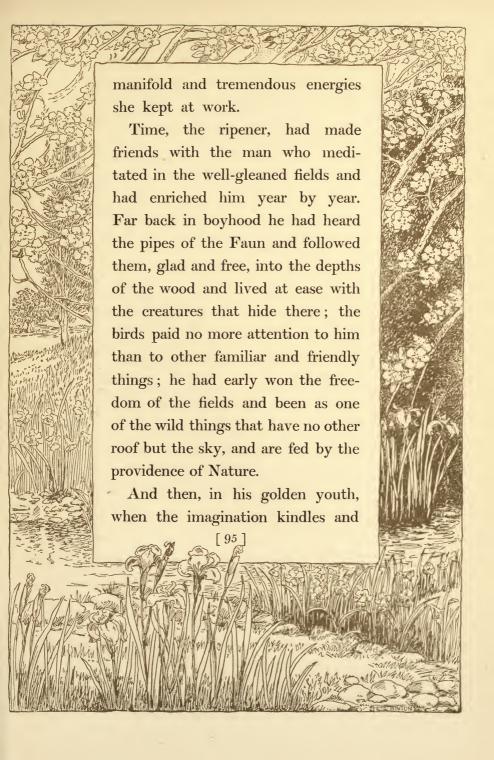
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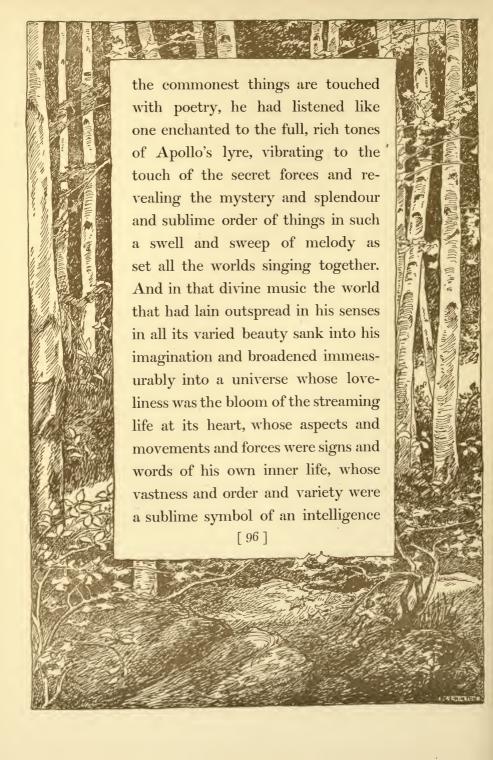
O the man who came slowly across the fields the whole world smelled of the ripened summer; of all the rich juices which had mounted out of the soul in a million million spears and stalks and blades and stems; of all the potencies of form and colour and odour, hidden in the darkness, that had escaped to take shape in innumerable grasses, flowers, and shrubs with a skill surpassing the thought of man, and had breathed into them a sweetness deep as the fathomless purity of Nature; of the mysterious fountain of life at the heart of things, which so many men have sought but

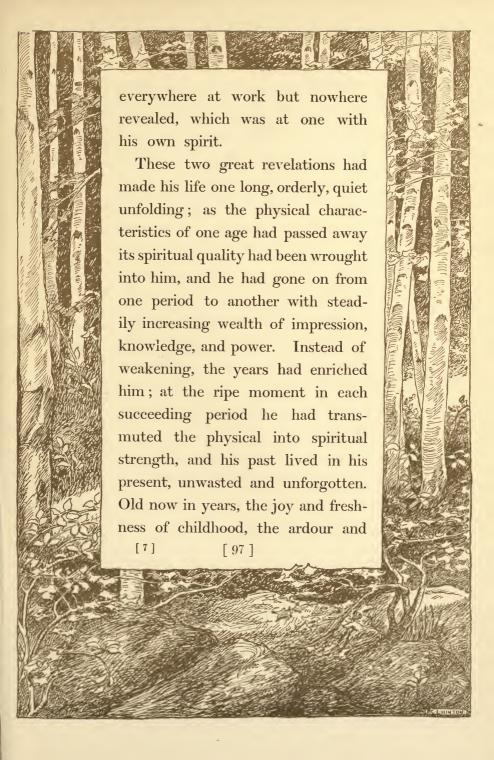
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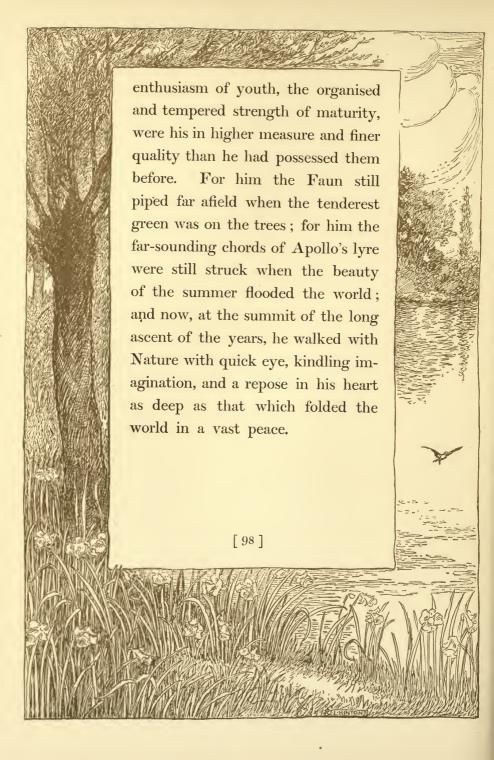
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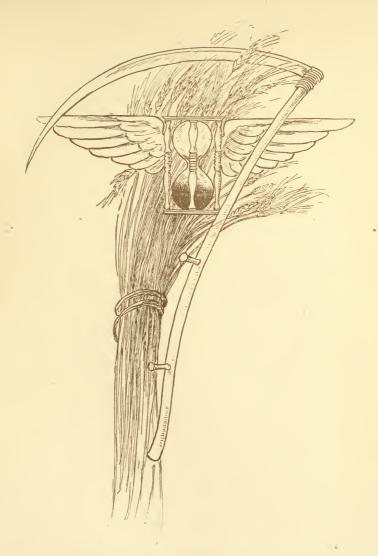












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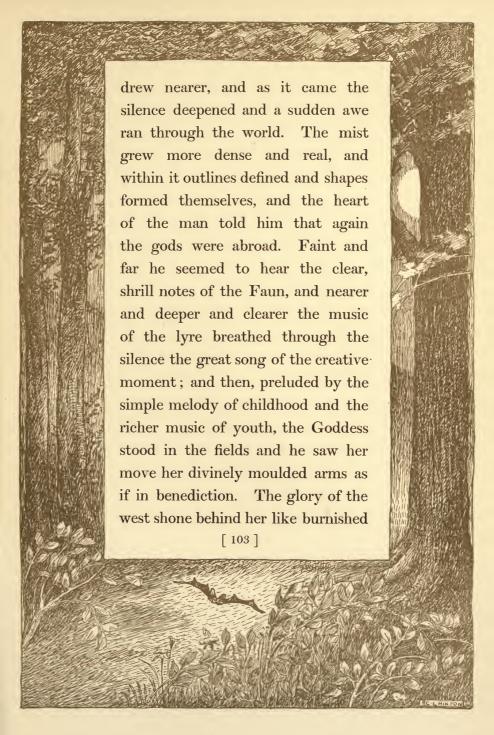
ND for him, as for all who live with Nature, the hour of revelation was not ended; upon the later as upon the earlier years there was to come the breath of the divine. As he walked the stillness seemed to deepen; the voices of reapers and gleaners died into silence; the great barges came to anchorage beside the barns. A hush fell upon the world toward sunset, so akin to that which fills the dim arches and deep aisles of cathedrals that the old man paused, looked thoughtfully over the landscape, and seated himself beside a familiar tree. The air was warm, and moved so gently

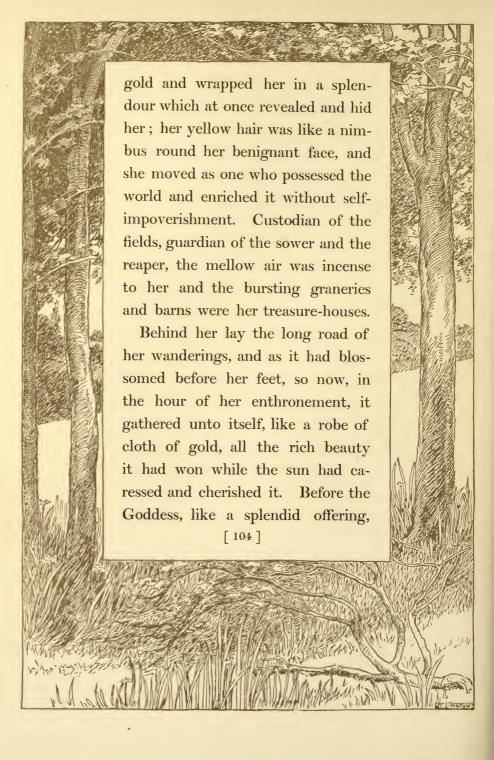
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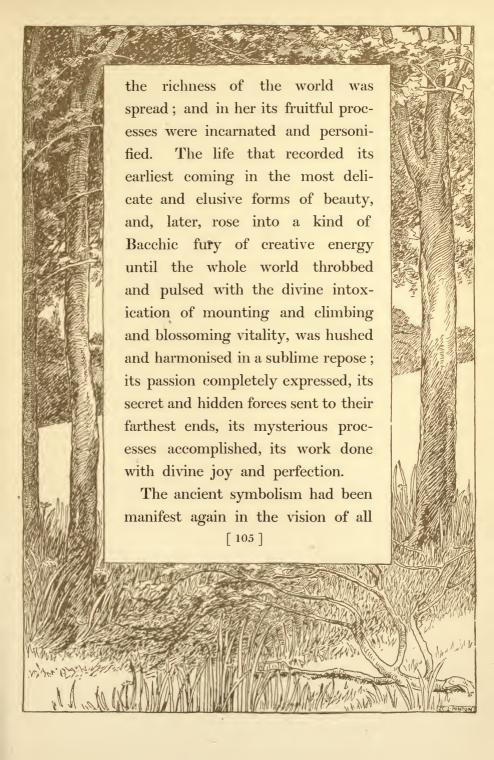
that it seemed like the caress of unseen hand; the western sky turned into gold and the world became a temple the splendour of which had been foreshowed, but never realised before. All things were silent; for it was the vesper hour of the summer and Nature was both shrine and worshipper.

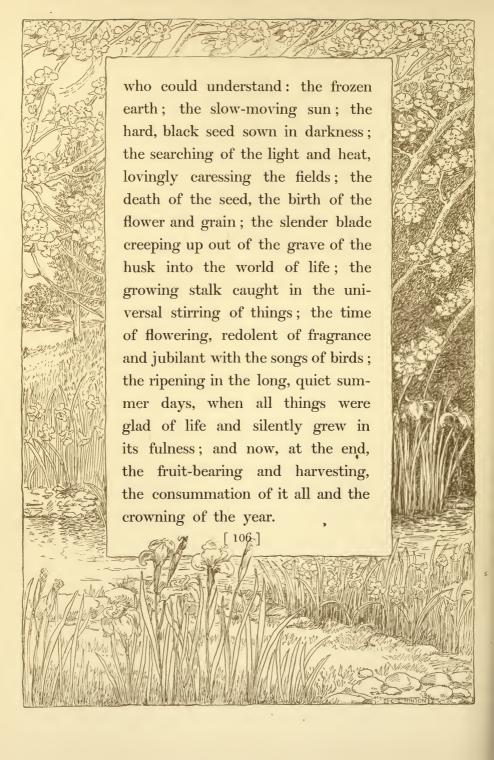
Reverent and worshipful the man sat with uncovered head, and eyes which seemed to see the vision of the years silently passing, laden with gifts. And while he waited and remembered and worshipped, across the level stretches of the fields, far toward the horizon, a golden mist seemed to move toward him, borne lightly forward by an unseen current of air. Slowly it

[102]











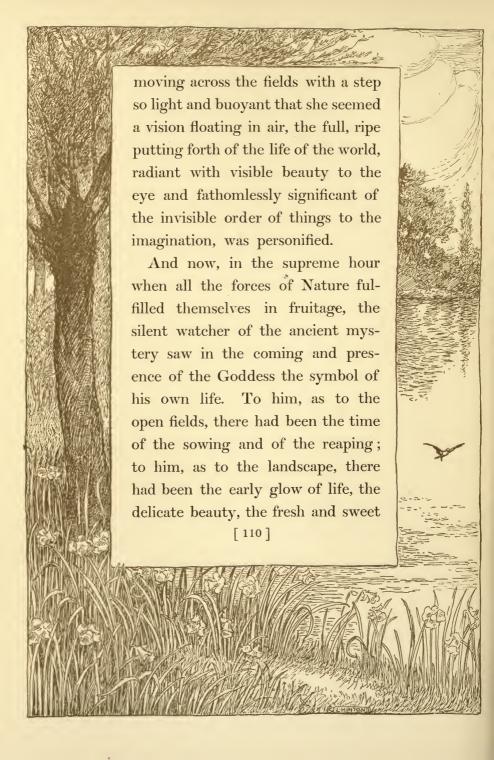
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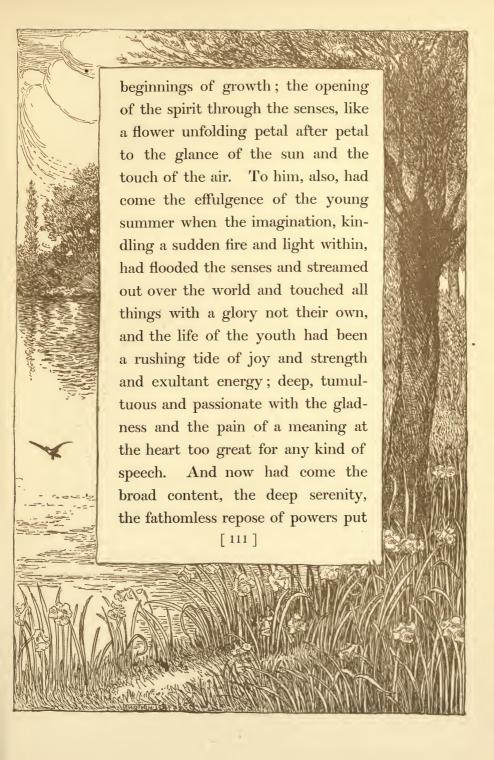


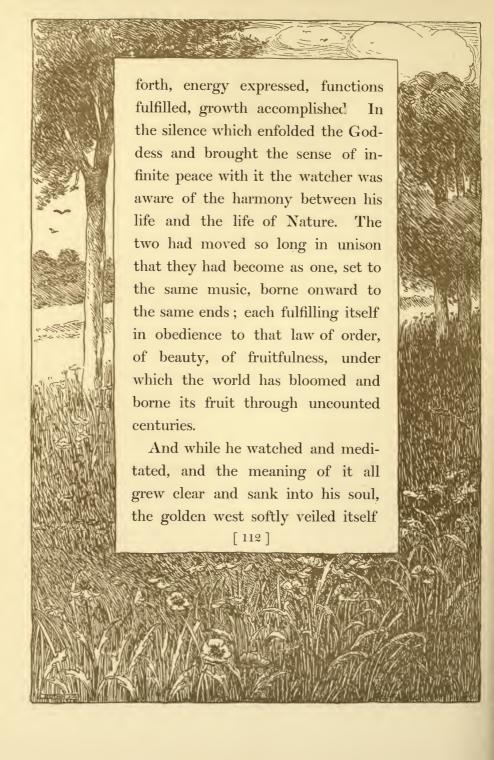


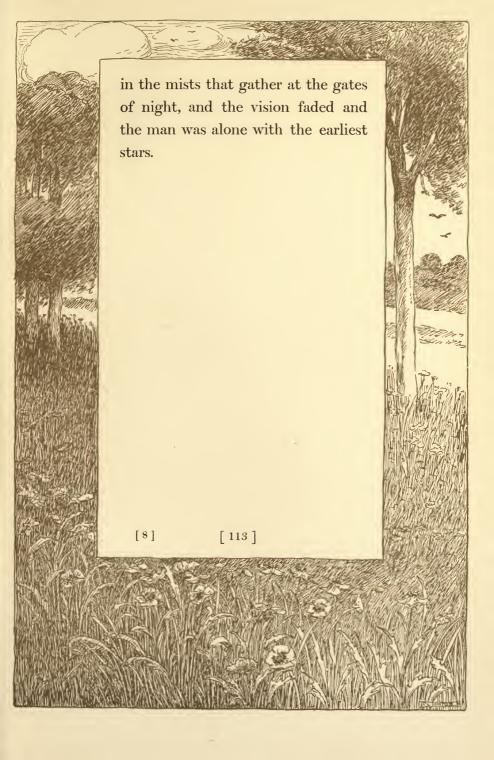
HE Goddess, whose yellow hair was like a nimbus of sunshine about her. brought the fragrance of the early summer in her train, and crocus and hyacinth, narcissus and violet, daffodil, arbutus, and hepatica were in the air in delicate suggestion; in her coming the rose, which lies on the heart of nature, the ravishing symbol of her passion, bloomed again in all its deep-dyed loveli-With her, too, moved the ness. rich, ardent, passionate, stirring and climbing and unfolding of midsummer, when the earth bares her heart to the sun and gives herself in a great surrender. In the Goddess.

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POSTLUDE

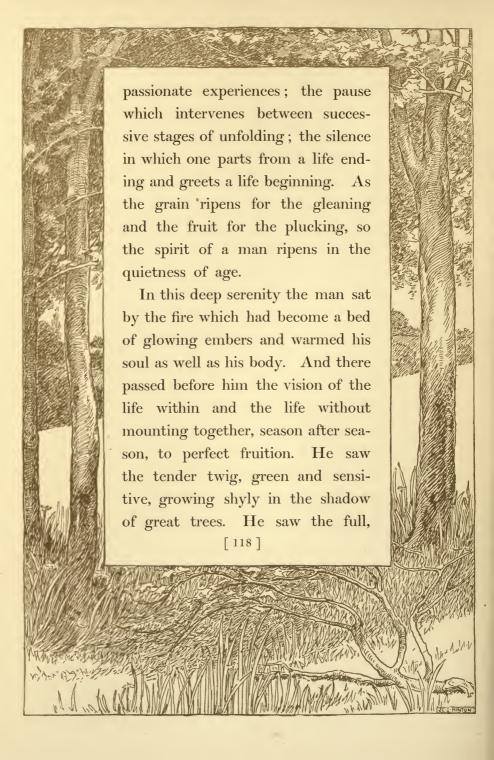
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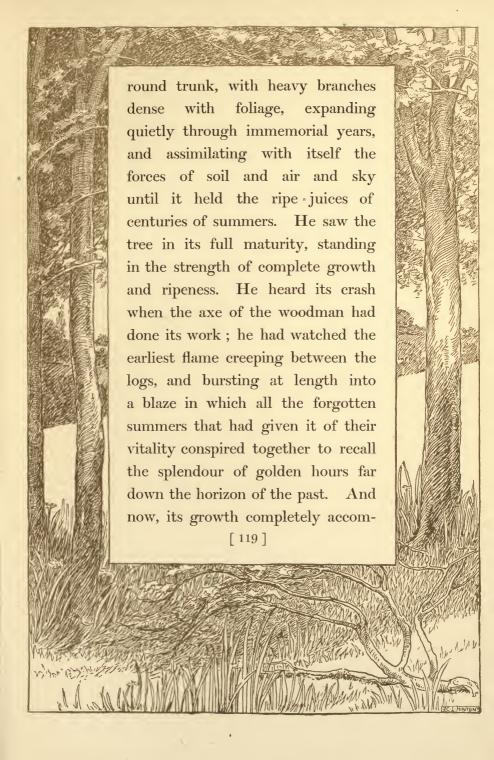


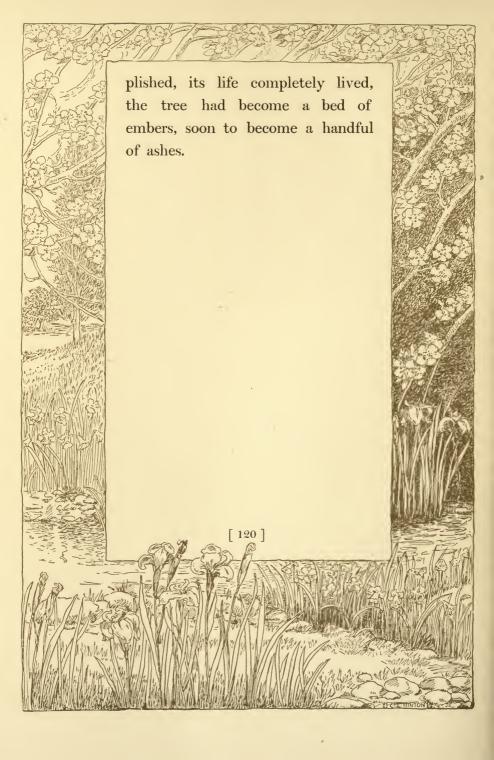
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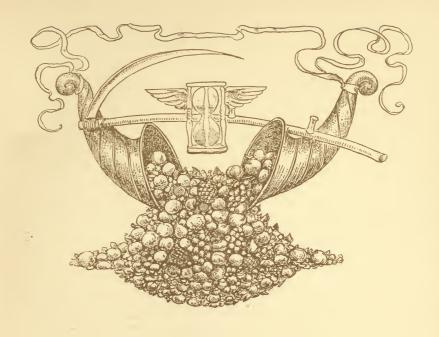
GE had come graciously to the man who sat before the wide hearth. There had been no sudden change, no withering of the affections, no abrupt decline of power; the tide had gone out gently and softly in the hush at the end of the day and left a deep peace behind it. There had been a long ripening, and then a half-realised translation of the physical into spiritual energies; knowledge had deepened into wisdom, and in the cool of the evening there had come that tranquil meditation which distils sweetness out of arduous activities and

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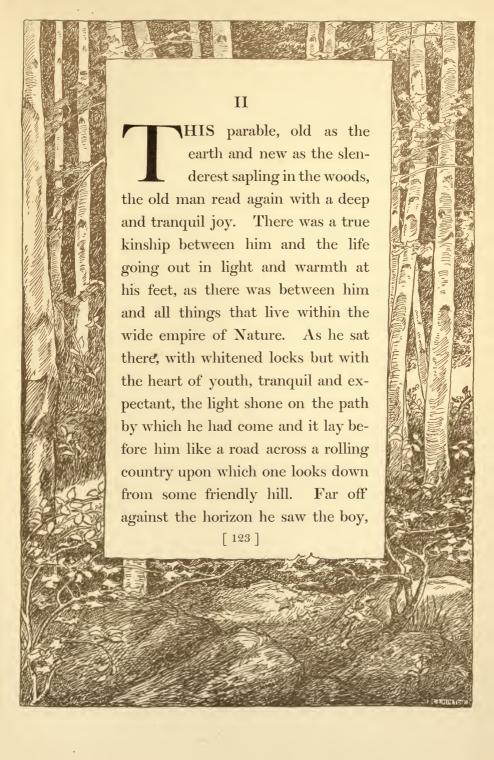


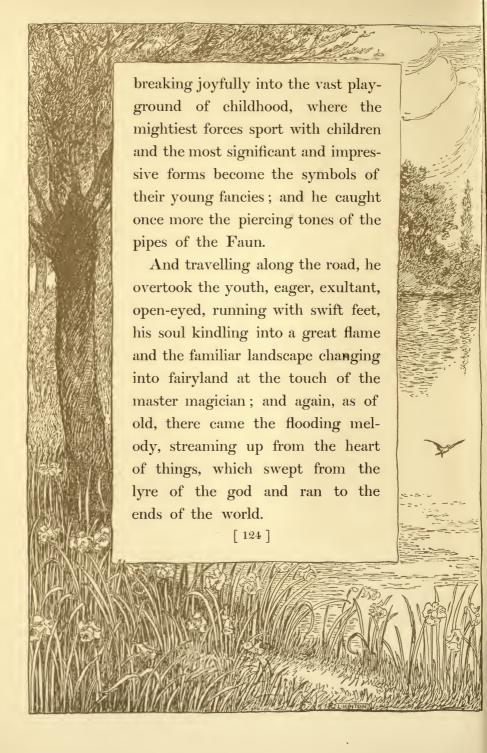


II

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"Without, the stillness of the winter night"



